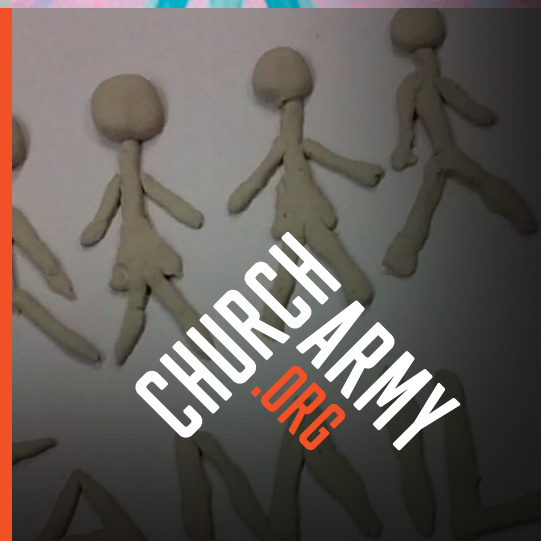


# PLAYFULLY SERIOUS

HOW MESSY CHURCHES  
CREATE NEW SPACE  
FOR FAITH

Church Army's Research Unit  
January 2019



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This report is a summary of a two-year research project conducted by Church Army's Research Unit, funded by the Archbishops' Council. It documents at a high level what we have learnt about the effects of Messy Church, the well-known model adopted by many parishes to reach more young families often so absent from church life. Our research participants have been predominantly Anglican and exclusively from an English context.

There are currently over 2800 Messy Churches registered in England. Resourced by a small team at the Bible Reading Fellowship, Messy Church has evolved around the following values:

- Creativity
- Hospitality
- Celebration
- All-age
- Christ-centred

These values shape the Messy Church format, regardless of whether a Messy Church is intending to be a fresh expression of Church or an outreach initiative.

For more, visit [www.messychurch.org.uk/our-values](http://www.messychurch.org.uk/our-values)

It would not have been possible to conduct this project without the goodwill, time and engagement of our research participants. Thank you all.

## Methodology in numbers

How many?	Who?	How?
174	Messy Churches	Telephone survey with leader
29	Messy leaders	Regional focus groups
12	Adult attenders	Innovative visual data-based research & interview
14	Child & teen attenders	Innovative visual data-based research & interview
12	Families who have left	Telephone interview

*“Orange, italicised quotes”* are used throughout this report to denote the direct quotation of research participants. The quotations selected are indicative of themes which became apparent throughout the qualitative components of the research.

## SUMMARY

Begun in 2004, Messy Church has since grown into a national phenomenon as a popular, practical model for local parishes engaging in mission.

But what effect is it actually having? How are Messy Churches growing disciples and how are Messy Churches maturing as church?

This research has discovered evidence to **CELEBRATE**

- Messy Church is reaching families who are new to church
- Messy Church is growing disciples
- Messy Church is modelling new patterns of leadership
- Messy Churches are developing and maturing as church

It also explores what happens when attenders **LEAVE** or Messy Churches **END**

Ongoing **CHALLENGES** exist around how

- Messy Church leaders are over-stretched and under-supported
- Messy Churches can find creating a culture of discipleship demanding
- Messy Churches are often vulnerable and under-resourced
- Messy Churches live with ambiguity over what it means to be church

So what **MORE** has been learned?

- Being intentional about discipleship is important
- Meeting more frequently is not necessarily 'the' answer
- Real community is messy

Finally, we **RECOMMEND** that the whole church needs to play its part

## WE CELEBRATE

The Messy Churches that took part in this research are reaching people who weren't previously attending church. According to a variety of measures, many are growing disciples. As new patterns of leadership are being modelled, Messy Churches are also showing indications of church development. Encouragingly, these things seem to be happening in a similar way across a wide range of economic and social contexts.

### Messy Church is reaching families who are new to church

Messy Churches aren't just attracting existing churchgoing families. Our statistical report, [Painting with Numbers](#), contains findings from 174 Messy Churches. These leaders estimate that among their attenders:

- 40% are non-churched families (those who have had little or no meaningful contact with church in the past.)
- 21% are de-churched families (those who have had previous contact with church but have stopped coming until now)

As indicated in the title of this report, engagement with families at Messy Church is 'playfully serious' (or seriously playful) and not just 'a bit of fun'. Messy Church strives to be Christ-centred in everything it does, with a distinctly Christian identity in name, values, teaching themes and a short time of worship as standard practice. 90% of leaders in our sample reported informal spiritual conversations taking place within their Messy Churches.

In one of our qualitative strands, we invited child and adult attenders to share their experiences of Messy Church through a range of creative ways to capture data. This has been written up in a report called [What Goes on Inside](#). Almost all the child attenders who participated in our research said Messy Church had begun their journey of following Jesus. A few adult attenders also said they had begun following Jesus at Messy Church, explaining their lack of knowledge about the Christian faith before attending. For example, one adult told us, *"We didn't know much about it before. We've never really come to church before...we started coming because of [someone on team] and now we never miss [it]."*

Messy Church creates a Christ-centred space that children love coming to. One leader told us *"often it'll be the children'll drag their parents along"* to Messy Church, while our attenders research reflected the ways in which

it is creating opportunities for children to invite their non-Christian friends. Children can be refreshingly straight-forward; a nine-year-old new to Messy Church, painted a sign and told us, *“if people don’t really know Jesus or they don’t follow him, it’s a sign to say about Jesus and if you want you can follow him.”*



### Messy Church seems to work almost anywhere

Using postcodes, we were able to track both the social and geographical contexts of the Messy Churches in our statistical sample. Analysing the findings through this lens, we noted how negligible the effect of context was on many impact measurements, including proportions of de-churched and non-churched attenders.



## Messy Church is growing disciples

### What is discipleship?

As our background paper [Discipleship Definitions](#) explains, 'discipleship' is a word that is hard to define precisely. We have identified five different dynamics at play:

- i. Formal learning – Informal learning
- ii. Key moments of decision – Lifelong journey
- iii. Head knowledge – Heart response
- iv. Owned individually – Owned in relationship
- v. Inner transformation – Outer transformation

However, as a simple working definition, we define discipleship as:

“a journey of following Jesus throughout the whole of your life”



Messy Churches are helping people to follow Jesus. Our statistical report, [Painting with Numbers](#), reflects growth in discipleship among the Messy Churches in our sample in a number of these different discipleship dynamics. Headlines include:

21%	Messy Churches held baptisms in their Messy Church community
13%	reported child or adult confirmations
81%	thought they saw evidence of lives changed in some way by being a part of Messy Church
32%	do discipleship through adults serving in teams
28%	do discipleship through children and young people serving in teams
31%	do 1-1 discipleship
29%	have run adult or family small groups

In another of our qualitative research strands, we listened to leaders of Messy Churches reflect together on their experiences in groups interviews. Findings from these focus groups are written up in the report [Managing the Mess](#). This includes leaders' observations on when and how discipleship seems to be happening most effectively. For example, one leader reported, *"believing parents [are] taking another family under their wings, doing things together and growing discipleship organically"*.

Measuring where people are on their journey is not always easy because it can be hard to tell what is going on inside an individual. The qualitative research we conducted with child and adult attenders showed that almost all attenders perceived Messy Church as keeping them on their journey of following Jesus.

For example, reflecting on the experience of decorating a bun, one child told us that, while some would say such an activity doesn't have much to do with God, when they give the buns to the people they are praying for, it helps her understand what it means to follow Jesus a bit better. One mum told us, *"I'm here for my children...I'm determined not to have [Christianity] pushed down their throats" ... but day-to-day Messy Church gives them "a little bit about Jesus' life and the Bible on a level for them" and helps us... "be a bit kinder as a family...more loving as a family."*

## Messy Church is modelling new patterns of leadership

Messy Churches have a tendency for alternative forms of leadership compared to inherited churches. Our statistical research [Painting with Numbers](#) reported:

- Two-thirds are lay-led, with 18% licensed lay and 48% unlicensed-lay
- 51% of these leaders are voluntary – as are their teams of helpers
- 76% of these leaders are women

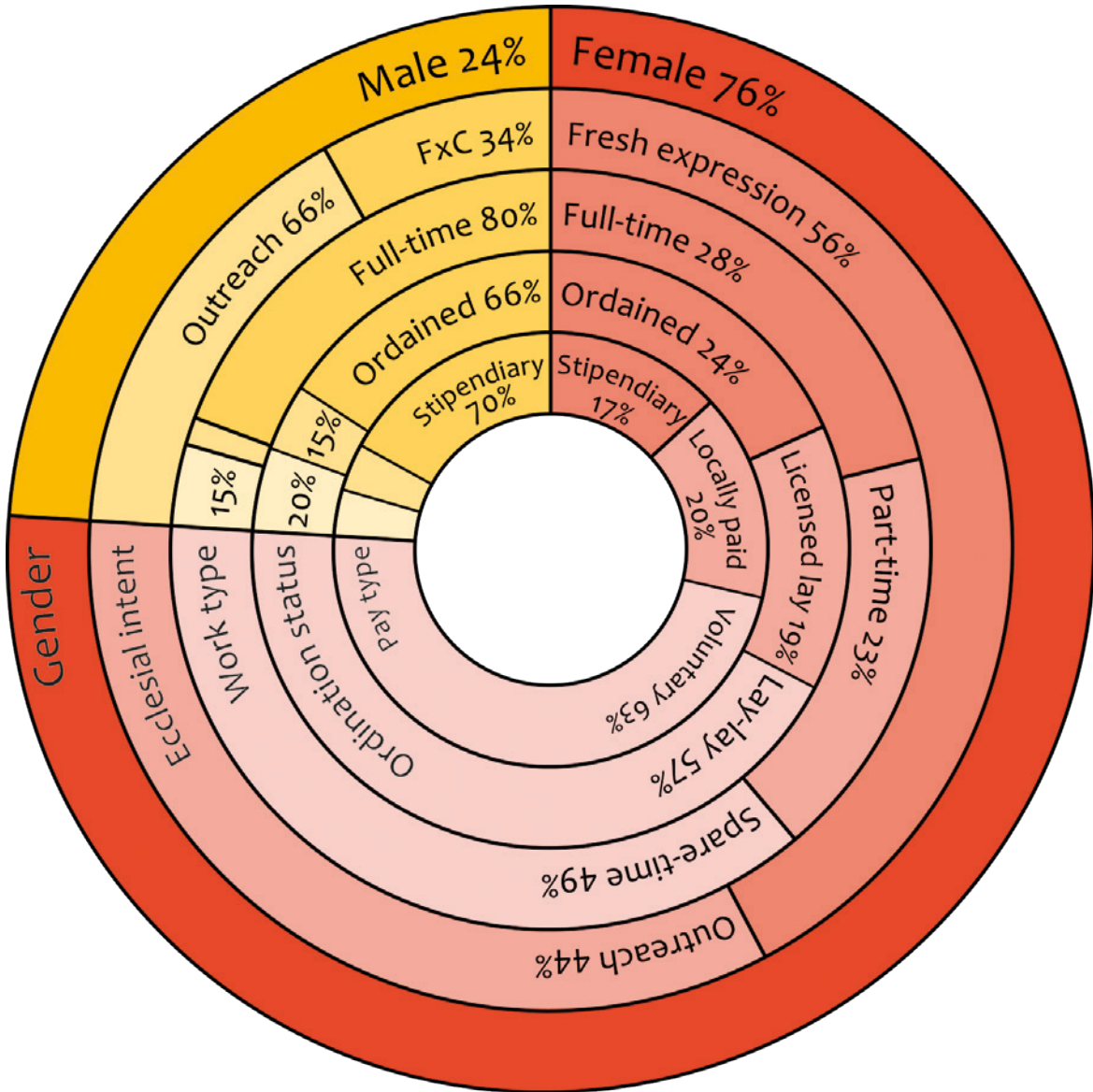
These figures reinforce the findings in [The Day of Small Things](#), our 2016 research into fresh expressions of Church; Messy Churches are predominantly led by women, laypeople and volunteers.

The focus group research we conducted with leaders brought several important things to our attention about the nature of leadership for Messy Churches. New people are being brought into such roles. As one leader observed, *“You don’t have to’ve been coming to the church for twenty years and be confirmed... anyone can be a Messy Church leader”*.

How their congregations behave and engage are also distinctive. Headlines from [Managing the Mess](#) include:

- An extremely strong culture of **generous group ownership**
- Comments about *“people giving their time, people giving their skills”* reveal a wealth of stories in which Messy Churches are *“empowering people to take more responsibility”* and *“building a community... where it’s not all dependent on the leaders”*.
- **Spontaneous and collective activity** is an important element in discipleship, as they minister unconditionally *“to offer God’s love to people”*.
- Leadership is often a **sacrificial endeavour** for their main leaders – not only in time and energy, but also in money. Indeed, many leaders attest to regularly subsidising the costs of crafts or food out of their own pockets.





## Messy Churches are developing and maturing as church

Our statistical research enabled us to track development as church in a number of ways, not only numerical attendance but also, for example, their level of engagement with Word and sacrament. For detailed findings and more about measures, read [Painting with Numbers](#) that includes the following headlines:

- 39% are engaging in sacraments
- At least 30% are building community outside of the main Messy Church gathering.
- 22% of leaders report that their Messy Church community engaged in further outreach (with an additional few planting further fresh expressions of Church initiatives)
- 40% had visitors inspired to begin their own Messy Church



### Not all Messy Churches intend to be fresh expressions of Church

Of the 174 Messy Churches interviewed for the main survey, 86 said they saw themselves as outreach initiatives, which they hope will provide families with a ‘bridge back’ into worshipping with the existing Sunday morning congregation. 88 saw themselves as new church congregations within their parishes designed to reach new people, i.e. fresh expressions of Church.

We found marked differences depending on intention. For example, sacramental progress was evident especially for those Messy Churches intending to be church. Where 39% of all Messy Churches were engaging in at least one sacrament, this percentage rose to 50% among those intending to be church.

Our research strongly suggests Messy Churches should be encouraged to consider a fresh expressions of Church approach if they wish to promote discipleship and it is not elsewhere addressed in the congregational life of the parish.

In [Managing the Mess](#), we report leaders’ reflections on their experiences of beginning Messy Churches as fresh expressions of Church. Many identified this kind of approach is needed for “... the future vision” of the church but they also reported that progress has often been achieved with little outside help or support. As we will unpack in the ‘Challenges’ section, many who lead Messy Church as church congregations or missional communities, are having to advocate that they actually are church.



## THE CHALLENGES

As one might expect, pioneering a new model of Church is not without its difficulties. Messy Church leaders are confronted with the simultaneous pressures of being widely under-resourced, frequently overstretched and often misunderstood. The challenges identified and the manner in which Messy Churches are responding underline a model exemplified by costly discipleship, humility and transformative ministry.

### Messy Church leaders are overstretched and under-supported

As [Painting with Numbers](#) reports, just over half of leaders were unpaid, and 41% led in their spare time. Only 34% of Messy Church leaders in our sample were clergy, but many perform a range of other jobs in church and so have *“many pulls in other directions”*.

In [Managing the Mess](#), stress and burnout were widely cited in focus groups as being the result of neglect by their parish or sending churches. One leader said, *“you don’t get any kind of pastoral or spiritual support for the work that you’re doing”* from them, while another’s church *“won’t give me a budget because they don’t want me to spend money”*.

The distress induced by this lack of support is compounded by burdensomely high expectations being placed upon the leaders of Messy Churches. One participant felt that *“As far as they [parish leadership] were concerned, I could do everything. And, you can’t [do*

*everything]!”* Another commented, *“You don’t have many churches that are run entirely by volunteers, do you?”*

Messy Church is an intensive model in terms of resources and labour – 60% of leaders said their teams being too busy was a hurdle for discipleship. One says it *“can feel like ‘whoa it’s all a bit busy there’, and actually... I wouldn’t be able to tell you who was there, because there’s so many people that you just don’t get to see and [you can’t] engage with everybody”*.

As well as limiting mission opportunities, this resource intensity often makes it hard for leaders to find new helpers. Several focus group participants were *“struggling to get new people coming through”*. Teams’ age and health may mean unless this volunteer turnover improves, then running their Messy Church was maybe *“just going to be physically impossible”*.

## Messy Churches can find creating a culture of discipleship demanding

Some of the leaders we spoke to shared their hesitancy around developing discipleship in Messy Church. Some stated, for a variety of reasons, that this was not their intention and they were looking to the wider church life or clergy to provide this. Others commented that they wanted to disciple families but didn't want to do the wrong thing. And yet, all were engaging with the Bible and 95% teaching worship and prayer, which perhaps points to a range of understandings as to the nature of 'discipleship', or a reticence to name it.

Our statistical research asked how naturally leaders felt their teams were able to share their faith on a scale of 1-10. While being a simple way to score what can be a complex dynamic, leaders reported 60% of their leaders were able to do so naturally despite only 29% having undergone any training in faith sharing. 25% of leaders said that a key hurdle to doing discipleship was lack of skills among their team. Without a confidence in sharing personal stories of faith, it will be difficult to create a culture of discipleship where this is normal and natural.

Since *"time flies"* in the busy Messy Church sessions, there can be a lack of opportunity to build and sustain friendships, and this is a hindrance to developing discipleship. As well as being busy themselves, leaders noted other constraints, including 11% of families being too busy and team not being sure of how to develop discipleship without unhelpfully adding to the pressures of family life. These kinds of issues also featured in our focus group discussions with leaders; *"If both partners are working all week" then weekends may be "their only time all together"*.

Despite this, the Messy Churches in our sample reported some progress in trying different discipleship approaches, and many leader and attender participants commented on the power of just listening to people in well-shaped, inclusive sacred spaces. For example, during our [What Goes on Inside](#) research, parent and child participants were able to talk together *"about growth and journeying with Jesus and continuing that journey"* as they painted a tree together to represent this. As they reflected together on where the journey leads, they added, *"And then the blossom is they have a deep relationship with Jesus."*

## Messy Churches are often vulnerable and under-resourced

The transience of attenders makes forward thinking in Messy Churches difficult. Most leaders who contributed to our focus group research [Managing the Mess](#) expressed prayerful trust in God, as leading Messy Church was often *“like taking steps into the unknown, rather than having a plan”*.

This sense of vulnerability is worsened when sending churches do not share the leaders’ vision or passion for Messy Church, which happens with discouraging frequency. One says, *“it sometimes feels as though we’re children’s church as far as most of the [Sunday Morning] congregation are concerned”*, and another that their sending churches give the impression they *“don’t actually need or want to know much about it really, [they] just let it happen”*.

Leadership development is hindered by this lack of church ownership. Other than the

collective planning sessions organised by the Messy Church leaders, many leaders felt that it was not *“feeding our team enough”*. One suggestion is that *“there needs to be some investment in the kind of, I don’t know... licensing is probably the wrong route”* - something to develop and train these under-equipped people in Messy ministries. Another is blunter: *“We need local support!”*

Messy Church is still young, and there are many open questions about its future. *“I don’t think any of us know really”*, said a leader when asked what Messy Church will look like in 5–10 years, *“just a really slow long road.”* There is a sense in which some Messy Churches are just ‘hanging on in there’. In doing this, they model both humble service and costly discipleship. However, help with some simple, light-touch forward planning might help towards longer-term stability.

## Messy Churches live with ambiguity over what it means to be church

Though we found little evidence of strategic developmental planning, Messy Church leaders seem to have adopted their own pragmatic and evolutionary learning approach. And whilst none of the Messy Churches in our sample were aiming to be formally independent, just over half intended to be informal church congregations. Furthermore, there was a clearly observable tendency for those with intention of being fresh expressions of Church to outperform outreach initiatives on almost all elements working toward self-sustainability.

Financially, many Messy Churches are covering their day-to-day costs, but often only just. Inviting donations and contributions is a common practise but a variable and unreliable source of funding. Many leaders make up shortfalls themselves or rely month-to-month on team contributing food and craft supplies directly.

What maturity as church looks like for a model as distinctive yet variable as Messy Church is a hazy question, and one which many leaders wrestled with in our focus groups. For some, maturity equates in their minds with consistency. Other leaders commented that you have to keep things evolving as *“it’s good that it does change. Keeps the freshness.”* Several were keen to point out Messy maturity doesn’t mean it resembles a conventional Sunday service.

Messy Church leaders often need to work hard to convince others that they should be taken seriously as church. While some enjoyed mutually supportive relationships with their sending churches, others reported far less positive experiences. Several said they felt clergy *“resented the fact that people who came to Messy Church didn’t come on a Sunday”*. And some said their sending churches simply saw Messy Church *“as a way of ticking its boxes for family and children’s work”*.



### Turning the tables of inquiry

Participants in our study asked whether the questions we were asking in our research were also relevant for existing congregations.

*“I’m not sure how much we know about where people are in discipleship in other congregations...”*

- Where else do we talk about congregational maturity or vulnerability in everyday church life?
- If the Painting with Numbers statistics were compared with data from existing Sunday morning congregations, what would it show?
- Do existing traditional congregations find it easy to invite new families to commit to regular giving?

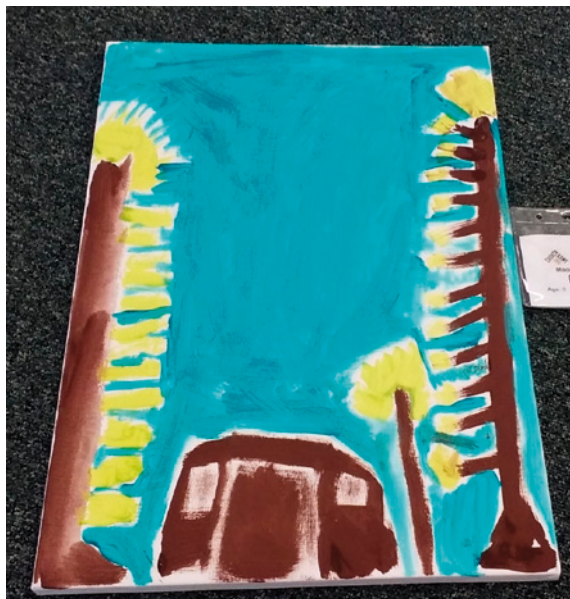
## WHAT HAPPENS...

### ...after a Messy Church has ended?

Of the 174 Messy Churches interviewed for the main survey, 49 (28%) had 'died'. Our [Messy Lifespan](#) analysis report presents the findings of follow-up interviews with the leaders of some of these. One of the most interesting findings was the number of encouraging things that had happened after the Messy Church had stopped. These included:

- The start of new initiatives that built on the experience of running Messy Church
 

*“The Messy Church values of intergenerational discipleship have been taken into an annual intergenerational holiday club which is proving really effective”*
- Members attending other church congregations or Messy Churches
- Continued connections with Messy Church families through other church and community activities
- Leaders starting or joining another Messy Church elsewhere





## ...to people who leave?

By asking leaders why they thought people had left, and tracking down and interviewing twelve adult attenders who had left, we can start to sketch a picture.

It is difficult to anticipate when people stop coming to Messy Church; as one leader put it, *“they don’t say, ‘I’m leaving now.’ They just don’t come any more”*. What is clear is the stark drop in attendance when children reach secondary school age; 79% of leaders and 75% of leavers gave as their reason for children leaving as no longer being the appropriate age. Indeed, 64% of leaders said no parents remained in the Messy Church after their kids hit secondary age. One adds, *“either you don’t see them again or they come as helpers”*, suggesting team participation could be a factor in maintaining involvement.

That said, *“it’s not just age that makes people drift off”*, it may also be the lack of age-appropriate activities. 49% had provision for secondary school age children (examples cited by leaders included more complex crafts, homework clubs running alongside the craft time and a teenage drama group preparing and delivering the Messy Church Bible story for the worship time).

Of our twelve leavers, nine told us their motivation in attending Messy Church was to introduce their children to Christianity. This appears to have been the outcome, at least within our sample, as many families who have ‘outgrown’ Messy Church continue to be engaged with Christian communities.

## SO WHAT MORE HAS BEEN LEARNED?

### Being intentional about discipleship is important

Those Messy Churches that intended to be church for attenders were more likely to see discipleship as their responsibility. Our findings strongly suggest that naming discipleship as an intention helps make it happen.

Deliberately creating space for spiritual conversations is important for helping them to happen more. As we found in our [What Goes on Inside](#) research, non-verbal mediums like art, image and sculpture can help touch on the deeper issues in life where words can't fully express **"the complexity of things that you don't see [which are] inside"**. Another value of using creativity in exploring discipleship is the way that it enables all ages to engage. As one child shared, **"I'm painting a forest... the journey through things... My craft is about the journey of being faithful to God... like you're walking through a forest and you're camping out for the night."**

In the [Managing the Mess](#) research, leaders shared their experiences of deconstructing the linguistic and cultural barriers that create challenges when talking about discipleship with families. **"We talk about journeys a lot and being on a journey."** Whichever way leaders decide is best for them, being intentional about working for these 'deeper' conversations with attenders is what helps to make it happen.

In the present church climate, anxious to see 'results', we are using the word 'discipleship' with increasing urgency to test the effectiveness of our mission activity. However, if it is **"a very churchy word"** for families who **"are not part of... established church"**, we need to stop and unpack what we mean by discipleship if we are to communicate well.



#### How would you explain discipleship?

As you read this, ask yourself - how would you explain what discipleship means to...

- A curious child?
- An adult with no previous experience of church?
- A lay leader who is frightened by the word 'discipleship' even though they have the gifts and skills to disciple others?

## Meeting more frequently is not necessarily ‘the’ answer

Many leaders and authors who study mission would love to see more Messy Churches meeting weekly, but we learned that whilst this is desirable, there are significant constraints which stop it from becoming reality. Only 5% of churches in our sample met more often than monthly. The voluntary leadership, the collaborative and creative approaches and the resource intensity often relate back to the *“finite number of resources [within] an established church”*.

Leaders mentioned the problem of *“trying to get people out on another night... They often work long hours... they just find it a bit much”*. Nonetheless, many are finding creative ways to connect between main gatherings. These include:

- pastoral visits
- prayer request email groups
- Facebook or WhatsApp chat groups
- meal rotas for families in pressured times
- follow-up for families who’ve drifted away
- hosting meals in homes
- weekends away or Christian conferences
- cinema trips, seaside trips, picnics, babysitting services, cookery clubs, sports, games or baking together

In [What Goes on Inside](#), our child and adult attender participants impressed upon us that busy family life makes monthly meeting feel quite frequent. What is more, they value the quality of their experience at Messy Church. One adult said, *“When you do Messy Church it’s like totally different to the rest of the services and it just sort of gives that ‘yeah, I do need to grow... I’ve got a whole life to live...”*

Another participant commented that Messy Church is about *“deepening learning... that very practical aspect of making mistakes and drawing comparisons with your own life through stories...in comparison to a more structured service. There’s not necessarily that time for exploration and application.”*

If holding gatherings more often than once a month means quality is compromised, this feedback should steer us towards caution.

## Real community is messy

A common sentiment among Messy Church leaders was that we should learn to better “accept the messiness of it”. Another two concluded together at the end of a focus group,

“Don’t try and -”

“- make it tidy ... Just accept it as a move of God and run with it.”

“Put it in a box.”

Attendees endorsed the sense of community at Messy Church, describing it as a safe place “even when it’s crazy” and somewhere “everyone is accepted for who they are”; a place where they and their families could be themselves. Many older children and adults described Messy Church as a space to share doubts, anxieties and troubles, and to be listened to, helped and encouraged.

Being pioneers, reaching out to those outside of the church, can be an uneasy and exhausting

place. It is often the case that “the majority of people at Messy Church are people who [the leaders] don’t know very well, and they tend to come irregularly”. And many of those who come have “nothing, in terms of a spiritual background or awareness, at all”. These and other factors can make leading a Messy Church very challenging – but no quick solution exists, just committing to relationships!

Despite these challenges, most Messy Church leaders in our focus groups were optimistic about attendees’ engagement – we heard many examples of people sharing one another’s burdens, deciding to serve, and expressing a growing confidence in the gospel. Some pointed out that, with so many other demands on modern life, “just returning” to Messy Church could be a signifier of deepening spiritual engagement for attending families.

The process can feel hard and slow but there are many encouragements and signs of hope.



### Is your mission messy?

As you read this, ask yourself – what did it feel like when you last helped someone relatively new to Christianity explore what it meant for their life?

- Was it a neat straightforward process?
- What helped the person grow into faith?
- How did it affect your own journey?



## RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

### The whole Church needs to play a part

If Messy Churches are to flourish and develop, we advocate for more forward planning and strategic support from within and without. Whether you intend to be an outreach initiative or a fresh expression of Church, reflection on practice and some forward planning is vital. There are many things one could focus on. From our research, we would highlight:

#### For leaders and teams of outreach Messy Churches:

- Affirm and encourage the development of intentional relationships between attenders, leaders and helpers. Not necessarily events – look for ways to share everyday life.
- Look for team members who find it easy to talk about their faith. Free them up to chat with families, whether that's informally or upfront.
- Look for opportunities to remain in touch with those who leave. E.g. send them a 'missing you' postcard or an invitation to seasonal events.

#### For leaders and teams of Messy Church fresh expressions of Church:

- Consider withdrawing from other church commitments to free up time for Messy Church and for the taking up of opportunities for pastoral and deeper faith conversations.
- Don't let the month-to-month practical arrangements for Messy Church push out the bigger issues of team development and strategic planning.
- Accept that for some traditional mindsets, understanding that Messy Church is Church will be a struggle. Make sure the right people understand what you are trying to do.

#### For clergy and PCCs of sending churches:

- Treasure your Messy Churches, and if you are serious about seeing your Messy Church develop as its own congregation, release your Messy Church leader(s) to only do Messy Church.
- Without micro-managing them, encourage your Messy Church leaders to focus on one goal for growth and development each year and support them in working for that. From time to time, ask how they're getting on.
- If you value your Messy Church as a church congregation, register it as a fresh expression of Church on your parish returns and count attendance numbers.

#### For overseers:

- Regularly check that Messy Churches in your diocese/deanery (or equivalent) are being treasured and valued and the leaders sufficiently encouraged.
- Consider how you can encourage and provoke more meaningful conversation about discipleship in wider church circles. Lead on giving examples of how discipleship can be explained to those who are confused by the word.
- Be ready to offer Messy Church training/ resources in pastoral care, faith sharing, chaplaincy work and facilitating deeper spiritual conversations and discipleship.
- Don't expect Messy Churches with their high proportions of newcomers and children to be a major source of income generation. Recognise and celebrate the sacrificial gifts of time, energy, food and regular commitment.

For more detailed reports and further resources arising from this research, go to:

[churcharmy.org/playfullyserious](http://churcharmy.org/playfullyserious)

## Church Army's Research Unit

Church Army's vision is for everyone everywhere to encounter God's love, and be empowered to transform their communities through faith shared in words and action.

Our Research Unit exists to help the Church in the British Isles and Ireland more fully realise how God is active in mission and to grow in understanding as to why churches' participation may falter or flourish. We work towards this through the provision of excellent and innovative research and consultancy that seeks to address these questions.

This research was conducted by the team during 2017-2018. Project lead: Claire Dalpra

## Funding

Research Commissioned by the Archbishops' Council



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